

Shakespeare on the Silver Screen:
Adapting *Romeo and Juliet* for Contemporary Moviegoing Audiences

Research Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation *with research distinction* in
English in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

Aliyah Cohen

The Ohio State University

April 2017

Project Advisor: Professor Sean O'Sullivan, Department of English

Abstract:

In *Reading (and Writing) the Ethics of Authorship: "Shakespeare in Love" as Postmodern Metanarrative*, Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack casually defend *Shakespeare in Love* through the lens of the postmodern desire to layer narratives. The moments in the film that Davis and Womack cite as being 'metanarrative' often imbue the film with an originality that, in my humble opinion, dismantles the recriminations of "some critics in the intelligentsia" who "question the artistic significance of the film's postmodern aspirations" (Davis and Womack 153). *Shakespeare in Love* merely references Shakespeare and his texts. However, a vast number of films exist that directly adapt the playwright's theatrical pieces. *Romeo and Juliet*, from which Norman and Stoppard seem to have derived inspiration in the creation of *Shakespeare in Love*, is no stranger to film adaptation. From George Cukor's black-and-white film of 1936, to Baz Luhrmann's tacky, gangster drama of 1996 and Carlo Carlei's miscast and misdirected *Romeo & Juliet* of 2013, the play has received cinematic treatment from several directors in several decades. Disregarding critical and popular opinion, I have enjoyed looking at the ways in which the three most recent adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, with the addition of *Shakespeare in Love*, compare with one another and with Shakespeare's play text. Beginning with Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film and ending with Carlei's, I delve into the specific ways in which these directors appeal to popular audiences through theme and character. I discuss the language of the cinema and the necessity of actively engaging with film in order to read this language. Ultimately, I conclude that the benefit of these films lies, not in their allegiance to Shakespeare, but in the changes they see fit to make to a tragic love story that surpasses authorial and temporal boundaries.

An Introduction to *Romeo and Juliet* and Film Adaptation

Most everyone has heard the tale: two teenaged lovers in fair Verona who marry against the wills of their interminably feuding families. The strife between their warring houses prevents a peaceful union, and in the style of any good Shakespearean tragedy, Romeo and Juliet do not survive to see the reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets. Most American students encounter *Romeo and Juliet* during their first or second year of high school. It is one of the first works with which young adults learn to associate William Shakespeare. For better or for worse, *Romeo and Juliet* has become one of the playwright's best-known and most widely loved theatrical pieces. Though the precise year and date remains unknown, most scholars concur that

Shakespeare wrote the play around 1595 (Greenblatt 897). Through the centuries that have passed since then, the themes of young love and irrational interfamilial strife have persevered and remain as prevalent now as they presumably were in the era during which Shakespeare wrote and staged *Romeo and Juliet*.

Scholars understand that these themes in *Romeo and Juliet* affected the English men and women of the Elizabethan era because, as Greenblatt writes, “The story of the ill-fated lovers from bitterly feuding families had been told many times in the sixteenth century by Italian and French writers and had already appeared more than once in English” (897). In fact, the plot of the play twenty-first-century readers and viewers attribute almost exclusively to Shakespeare comes from another source entirely. Shakespeare adapted an English poem written by Arthur Brooke in the year 1562, titled *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*. Brooke based his poem on a 1559 piece of French prose written by Pierre Boaistuau, “...who was in turn adapting an Italian version by Bandello (1554), who in turn based his narrative on Luigi da Porto’s version (1525) of a tale by Masuccio Salernitano (1476)” (Greenblatt 897). Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*, is in fact an adaptation (of a translation, of a translation, of an interpretation, of an adaptation). The playwright used his own linguistic gifts to reproduce, with a twist, an established tale told many times over and clearly popular among playgoing audiences of the time period.

Contemporary filmmakers share the enthusiasm Shakespeare demonstrates in *Romeo and Juliet* for simultaneously duplicating and reimagining a pre-established storyline. Since the advent of the motion picture, “well over half of all commercial films have come from literary originals” (Andrew 29). Ray attributes this overlap between the fields of literature and film to

their mutual reliance on narrative. They are both storytelling formats that possess what he terms “narrative transmutability” (39). The label accompanies Ray’s suggestion that both literature and film operate with the intention of conveying a story, and that the tropes, codes, and conventions for doing so wander between mediums. Take as an example Shakespeare’s Chorus, which assumes responsibility for revealing the plot of the play about to unfold onstage. Film directors adapting *Romeo and Juliet* may substitute introductory devices unique to their medium in order to fulfill the duties of the Chorus. If designed and directed effectively, the substitution results in increased accessibility for contemporary audiences who lack experience with an omnipotent Chorus. This particular revision adds a historical dimension to Ray’s argument in favor of narrative transmutability. A shift between literature and film can potentially cater to the needs of an audience removed from the conventions of storytelling particular to a specific era and medium. The benefits of this transition become especially clear during an analysis of the last fifty years of Shakespearean film adaptation.

Adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*

Just as the teenaged lovers, Romeo and Juliet, ultimately succumb to the fate prescribed by the genre of Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet* has not escaped the insatiable desire of film directors in America and abroad. One of the first full-length, big-studio adaptations of the play appeared in 1936, under the direction of Hollywood’s George Cukor. For several years, MGM Production Chief Irving Thalberg believed a *Romeo and Juliet* film would bring power and prestige to the studio, and waited patiently for the project to gain ground. His interest also sprung from the desire to cast his wife, Norma Shearer, in the lead female role (Passafiume). One of the production team’s biggest challenges appeared during the casting of a Romeo to act

opposite Shearer, who was already in her mid-thirties and, therefore, debatably too old to play Juliet. Frederick March, Clark Gable, Laurence Olivier, and Brian Aherne all rejected the role for various reasons - mostly age (Passafiume). Ultimately, the producers selected forty-two-year-old Leslie Howard. Criticisms of the film often revolve around the agedness of the actors playing Romeo and Juliet. Most viewers cannot shake the impression that Howard and Shearer, but especially Howard, are simply too old to play teenagers caught in the thralls of first passion. Additionally, the movie's black-and-white pigmentation may alienate late-twenty and twenty-first-century audiences born into the world of color film (Greenblatt 904). The rich, vivid picture quality of modern films spoils and impedes a contemporary audience's ability to enjoy black-and-white movies.

After Cukor, American film director Robert Wise, along with stage director and choreographer Jerome Robbins, headed *West Side Story* - a loose, musical adaptation that hit theaters in 1961. It enjoyed enormous success, winning ten Academy Awards including Best Picture in an era during which the musical genre dominated Hollywood filmmaking (Berardinelli). Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer play the catastrophically lovestruck leads, Maria and Tony, who unfortunately derive from opposing sides of ethnically-divided gang conflict. Neither Wood nor Beymer sing their characters' songs, and instead act alongside dubbed vocal performances by Marni Nixon and Jimmy Bryant, respectively (Berardinelli). *West Side Story*, the film, relies upon Robbins and Leonard Bernstein's stage musical of the same name for its source material (Berardinelli). Both the stage and screen productions translate the conflict between the Montagues and the Capulets into a rivalry between caucasian American and Puerto Rican gangs in New York City (Greenblatt 904)). The 1961 film is the product of multiple

adaptations in much the same way that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* updates and transforms a narrative written by several other authors in languages other than English. However, rather than adhering to Shakespeare's blend of prose and verse, *West Side Story* tells its own tale of forbidden love ending in tragedy through the language of music and dance.

In 1968, Italian director Franco Zeffirelli led the production of what Greenblatt describes as “a flower-power, 1960s youth-culture interpretation of the play...” (904). In contrast to the aged, celebrity leads cast in Cukor's *Romeo and Juliet*, this later film stars two teenaged, no-name actors. Zeffirelli conducted an international search for young men and women to play his *Romeo and Juliet* that attracted the attention of the media as well as popular and critical film audiences. He and his production staff ultimately chose Leonard Whiting, a 17-year-old British man, and 16-year-old Olivia Hussey of Argentina to portray Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers (Ebert). Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* disregards big-studio politics and celebrity culture, and embraces a critical interpretation of the title characters as teenagers who have fallen in passionate, lustful love for the first or nearly the first time. The film, though widely viewed as the classic and the best adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, nevertheless has received criticism for its condensed language. Zeffirelli cut almost half of the text of Shakespeare's play (Ebert). Most will forgive this directorial decision, and consider instead the excellence of Zeffirelli's casting and, furthermore, the superb work of costume designer Danilo Donati. The rich, vivid fabrics in which Donati clothed the cast offset the grayness of the sets and natural quality of the lighting (Ebert). Simultaneously, as will be discussed later on, the costume choices convey Juliet's experience of sexual awakening.

Baz Luhrmann's 1996 adaptation of the play, titled *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, features Hollywood stars Clare Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio in the lead roles. At 17 and 21 years of age, respectively, Danes and DiCaprio appear bright, beautiful, and full of youthful passion (Gleiberman). No doubt, the decision to cast this duo was motivated primarily by their attractiveness to young adult audiences. Like much of the film's decadence and glamor, Danes and DiCaprio are tasked with capturing and maintaining the attention of viewers who Luhrmann seems to believe might otherwise find the narrative cold and alienating (Gleiberman). Luhrmann transports the drama to "Verona Beach," where the Montagues and the Capulets embody "rival corporate dynasties" (Gleiberman). Through its MTV aesthetic, multicultural setting, and concentration on media presence, the film modernizes the themes and characters of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* such that they hardly resemble those of Zeffirelli's '68 film. Accordingly, screenwriter Craig Pearce severely shaved Shakespeare's language. He did so mostly in the interest of time (Gleiberman). Interminable monologues would have bogged down an otherwise fast-moving motion picture filled with jump cuts and sped-up footage. However, the Bard does not go unrecognized, and though Luhrmann's cast generally lacks a British accent or extensive experience with Shakespeare's diction, the performers nevertheless maintain the essence of Shakespeare in their speech. Ebert best summarizes the film with his observation that, "Zeffirelli in 1968 focused on love, while Baz Luhrmann's popular version of 1996 focused on violence; something fundamental has changed in films about and for young people, and recent audiences seem shy of sex and love but eager for conflict and action."

Another film that merits mention cannot truly be classified as an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Two years after the release of Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, John Madden directed the

British-American romantic comedy *Shakespeare in Love*. Madden's film imaginatively spoofs scholastic and popular interpretations of Shakespeare's life as well as his writing process and, specifically, the composition of *Romeo and Juliet*. It stars Joseph Fiennes as Will Shakespeare and Gwyneth Paltrow as the Lady Viola de Lesseps. The two pursue a forbidden romance surrounded and complicated by characters including Judy Dench as Queen Elizabeth, Ben Affleck as the Shakespearean actor Ned Alleyn, and Rupert Everett in the likeness of Christopher Marlowe. Like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Shakespeare in Love* expertly combines comedy and tragedy. The individuals and the circumstances that surround Will and Viola are often culturally anachronistic, and therefore humorous. However, these same elements of the film ultimately barricade the lovers from the union they desire. Furthermore, within and outside of the fabric of Will and Viola's romance, *Shakespeare in Love* includes moments that are reminiscent of scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* and from other works in Shakespeare's canon. The film weaves a complicated intertextual network connecting its contained love story with that of Shakespeare's young, fictional lovers of Verona. For this reason, it belongs among tighter, more traditionally accepted adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Most recently, in 2013, Italian director Carlo Carlei cast Hailee Steinfeld and Douglas Booth in his own adaptation: *Romeo & Juliet*. While maintaining vital plot points, characters, and themes, Carlei's film strays far from the language of Shakespeare's play text. The screenwriter, Julian Fellowes, made enormous cuts, additions, modifications, and simplifications to the entire body of text. For instance, Fellowes replaced the opening street feud between the young men of the Montague and Capulet families with a jousting tournament hosted by Prince Escalus, who hopes to resolve and soothe tensions between the houses. On paper, the

replacement probably appeared clever and original. However, the resulting scene causes more confusion than clarity. The convoluted sequence of events defies viewer expectations and requires a degree of concentration equal to, if not exceeding, that necessitated by Shakespeare's language. Carlei's *Romeo & Juliet* has received terrible reviews, such as the following from Susan Wloszczyna: "...this attempt to sell Shakespeare to the 'Twilight' faithful is so ill-conceived, it makes me wish it were possible to give a retroactive Oscar to Baz Luhrmann's madly passionate South Beach gangsterland 'Romeo + Juliet'..." Regardless, one cannot discuss contemporaneous adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* without mentioning Carlei's film and attempting to discover any worth it may possess to a twenty-first-century filmgoing audience.

Some critics would expand this list. However, for the purposes of this thesis, further indulgence will not be necessary. The four most recent films appeal to a contemporary audience more effectively than Cukor's adaptation. As opposed to the teenaged flower-power environment of Zeffirelli's film, or the youthful gang violence that permeates Luhrmann's, Cukor's *Romeo and Juliet* stars an actor and actress who simply do not kindle the vivacity or passion of romance experienced for the first time. This casting decision certainly merits critical exploration; however, it does not reflect contemporary ideas concerning the ages at which Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love (or lust, as suggested by some readings of the text). Howard and Shearer had experienced life too extensively to convey the sweet innocence of Shakespeare's young lovers. Furthermore, while *West Side Story* is wonderful and enjoyable in its own right, it lacks any devotion to Shakespeare's text beyond the simple matter of plot. Themes from *Romeo and Juliet* appear in *West Side Story*, however the film's dialogue is nowhere near Shakespearean. Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei's films provide a richer and vaster pool of material

from which critical viewers may extract information pertaining to contemporary understandings and interpretations of Shakespeare's tragicomic play.

The Relevance of Adaptation

The revisions these four directors - Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei - make to conventions of both the literary medium and the text of *Romeo and Juliet* transport Shakespeare's work through the centuries and into the present era. They increase a contemporary audience's ability to comprehend and to connect with Romeo and Juliet's journey. Through cinematic interpretations of the balcony scene and Shakespeare's Chorus, the directors demonstrate the "narrative transmutability" of literature and film. The balcony scenes reveal some of the most persevering characteristics of the films in which they appear, such as the dominance of Olivia Hussey's Juliet, the intertextuality of Madden's film, the characteristic simplicity from which Carlei's film derives universal accessibility (and critical disdain), and the temporary isolation Danes's Juliet and DiCaprio's Romeo enjoy from the outside world of gang violence and interfamilial strife. They mold the films by establishing character traits, theme, and focus. These scenes can almost stand alone as representations of each adaptation. For this reason, an analysis of the balcony scenes appears first among the examinations and arguments made in this thesis. Modifications to Shakespeare's Chorus also introduce lasting themes into the four adaptations. They, like the balcony scenes, act as framing devices for each director's individual interpretation of the play. Zeffirelli comments on the authority with which popular audiences imbue celebrity figures such as Laurence Olivier. Luhrmann's radical alterations comment on the mass media culture of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-centuries. The parallels between John Webster in Madden's film and Shakespeare's Chorus reveal the tendency of *Shakespeare in*

Love to experiment with multiple authors and multiple layers of storytelling. Finally, Carlei's modifications to the Chorus and to the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet* suggest that not all revisions are made equally, and that some will debilitate, rather than facilitate, understanding.

From the balcony and the Chorus, the conversation transitions into the way in which Luhrmann, Madden, and even Zeffirelli (although he filmed on location in Verona, Italy) appeal to contemporary audiences through setting. Intertextuality imbues otherwise unfamiliar scenes of Shakespeare's Verona or Elizabethan England with elements recognizable to a late-twentieth- or twenty-first-century audience. References to William Shakespeare's life and career, such as his writing process and plays including, but not limited to, *Romeo and Juliet* appear in Luhrmann and Madden's films. These allusions preserve the essence of "Shakespeare," but transport the playwright into a tangible sphere that modernizes him and his plays to fit the needs of contemporary audiences. Culturally anachronistic moments also shrink the distance between the films' environments and contemporary viewers. References to modern social and political ideas, feminist concepts in particular, familiarize viewers to the setting of Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* as well as that of Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*.

However, viewers must successfully read the language of cinema embedded in these adaptations to gain a comprehensive appreciation for the transmutations made to Shakespeare's play text. This point concludes the discussion of Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei's films because it broadens the scope of analysis concerning film adaptation. Luhrmann and Carlei cinematize Friar Laurence's announcement of his scheme to counterfeit Juliet's death and reunite her with Romeo. In each film, the scene serves as a reminder to audience members that they must willingly suspend disbelief and enter the world of the film without exercising judgement or

doubt. Other scenes prior to Juliet's desperate interaction with the friar serve a similar purpose. Viewers of Luhrmann's film must connect a voiceover spoken in Leonardo DiCaprio's voice to the mental mediations of the fictional character he portrays. The image of Clare Danes's startled Juliet whipping her head around in slow motion as Romeo shoots Tybalt for the last time also requires viewers to rearrange their expectations. They must associate two seemingly unrelated images, as during Carlei's film when a glimpse of Tybalt sharpening his sword immediately follows Romeo and Juliet's elopement. This manipulation of image placement intentionally conveys unspoken details that a film director considers vital to his or her individual interpretation of the story. The act of suspending disbelief and reading the image-based language of film enables a viewer to engage profitably with these cinematic adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In an effort to increase their accessibility to audiences far removed from the language and setting of Shakespeare's play, Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei adopt adaptive, meta-narrative, and cinematic techniques. The updates their four films make to the balcony scene and the Chorus of Shakespeare's text, as well as references to Shakespeare and instances of cultural anachronism, benefit contemporary audiences by fitting Shakespeare's themes into a modern worldview. Their allegiance to the characteristic devices of cinematography benefits viewers by speaking in a language that they are sure to understand, even if it does not necessarily preserve Shakespeare's Early Modern English.

Adaptations of the Balcony Scene

The balcony scene during which Romeo promises to marry Juliet has assumed an iconic status among readers and viewers. As mentioned previously, all four films contain adaptations of the balcony scene. Zeffirelli's is both classic in style and true to Shakespeare's text. However,

Zeffirelli's Juliet (Olivia Hussey) is unique among traditional portrayals in that she keenly expresses and acts upon her passion for Romeo. Ebert says of his time on the set of the balcony scene during filming, "I remember the heedless energy that Hussey threw into it, take after take, hurling herself almost off the balcony for hungry kisses. (Whiting, balanced in a tree, needed to watch his footing.)" The critic's observation attests to the strength with which Hussey's Juliet prevails over the action of this sequence. Whiting's Romeo merely reacts to the intensity of her passion. Scott asserts that, "The spacial strategies of Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* emphasize Juliet's sexual awareness and her open expressions of desire" (138). Characteristics of the film's balcony scene support her analysis. From the vines and bushes below, Romeo (Leonard Whiting) watches Juliet lean upon her balcony. Backlighting from within her bedroom casts an aura of warm, yellow light upon her figure (*Romeo and Juliet*). Taken together, the difference in heights and the bright emanation around Juliet enhance her perceived dominance. She exhibits an angelic, celestial presence supported by both her physical height above Romeo and the warm, glowing aura produced as a result of backlighting. In comparison, Romeo seems fawning and worshipful. Not only does he confine himself, in this moment, to a plane below Juliet's height, but he conceals himself in the bushes so as not to startle the radiant young lady. Of course, Romeo moves shortly thereafter to a more prominent location. For the moment, however, Juliet enjoys the advantage of height and, therefore, rules the screen.

As Juliet delivers her monologue, the camera views her from below. It adopts the perspective of her hidden lover, who must climb a tree and hang precariously onto the side of the balcony wall in order to converse with the object of his desire (*Romeo and Juliet*). As a result, viewers must content themselves with receiving the scene through Romeo's eyes. Camera angles

disadvantage the viewer and, consequently, force an association with Romeo in his humbled position beneath Juliet's balcony. Even after he climbs to her level, a height discrepancy remains. The lens follows Romeo as he scrambles from ground, to tree, to balcony wall. Yet, neither he nor the camera joins Juliet on level ground. Even while the two embrace, she remains an inch or two above him (*Romeo and Juliet*). Juliet's height, and with it the young woman herself, maintain a characteristic unattainability. At her own request, Romeo meets her at a level higher than the ground, yet nevertheless unequal to her altitude. She does not allow him onto the balcony itself, despite the considerable effort he exerts in order to reach her. From there, Juliet possesses exclusive power to send him away with a quick and simple call to her watchful nurse (Pat Heywood). She is unlikely to do so; however, Romeo must nevertheless preserve an awareness of his trespass on the Capulet property. The mere inches maintained between her height and his during their interaction on the balcony symbolize and maintain this pervading sense of infraction. Romeo hovers near Juliet, but remains prepared to fly from the scene at a moment's notice. In total, this scene combines camera angles, blocking, and spacial orientation in order to increase Juliet's agency over Romeo's fawning behavior.

Shakespeare in Love includes a creative rendition of this late-night interaction between the desperate lovers. Although ironic and self-deprecating, this scene comments on the narrative value of the romance between Will Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) and Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow). Viola stands on the balcony outside her bedroom door monologuing, "Romeo, Romeo. A young man of Verona. A comedy of William Shakespeare," when Will surprises her from below with the whispered appeal, "My lady!" (*Shakespeare in Love*). Viola's lament spoofs Juliet's, "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" (2.2.33). Instead of

Romeo Montague, however, Viola yearns for Will Shakespeare. The authorial father-son relationship between the men lends irony to her breathless exclamation. Viola simultaneously employs and disassociates herself from Juliet's language. She admires and longs for the very author of Miss Capulet's misfortunes. However, Viola's textually-inspired exclamation supports the notion that the social barriers standing between her and Will both resemble and inspire those that impenetrably separate Romeo and Juliet. Romeo's surname, Montague, and the established hatred the Capulets feel towards that title prevent him from peacefully associating with Juliet's family. Similarly, Will Shakespeare cannot fraternize with the de Lesseps because he lacks a wealthy, powerful name. In both romances, real and imagined, labels assume authority over emotion. Names serve as societal indicators of class and determine the boundaries of a strict behavioral code.

Unlike the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, Will's midnight call on Viola attracts the attention of his lady lover's household. The scene ends quickly after Will climbs a row of vines and is discovered by Viola's nurse (Imelda Staunton). Her screams wake the men of the house, who pursue Will in a frenzied chase from the de Lesseps' home (*Shakespeare in Love*). The nurse's startled reaction and Will's fall from the balcony wall into the bushes below imbue the scene with comedy missing from the text of Shakespeare's balcony scene. Will's frantic rush down the de Lessups' driveway and to the boat that takes him away from their property meets viewers' expectations of the exaggerated caricature of William Shakespeare acted by Joseph Fiennes. Madden, Norman, and Stoppard recognized the need to conclude their balcony scene parody quickly and without the promise of marriage that completes the scene in Shakespeare's text. For, Will and Viola's romance differs prominently from Romeo and Juliet's in that the

former couple never pursues a legally binding marriage. In fact, the very force that terminates their midnight rendezvous - namely, the will of Viola's family - also contributes to the couple's acceptance of their inability to marry.

Shakespeare in Love references the balcony scene of Shakespeare's text once again during a prolonged montage that interweaves the development of Will and Viola's romance with the former character's composition of *Romeo and Juliet*. Davis and Womack describe the process: "Norman and Stoppard demonstrate the reawakening of Will's imagination—indeed, the resuscitation of his gift at the writerly hands of Viola—through a sensual and protracted montage that deftly shifts between the text of Will's life and the act of composing *Romeo and Juliet*" (158). The medley begins as Will sits down to write at his desk in the loft of the Rose Theater. A voiceover spoken by Paltrow reads from the text of the play: "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?" The action that follows switches between moments of intimacy in Viola's bedroom and of rehearsal at the Rose. In both settings, the couple recites lines taken from the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet* (*Shakespeare in Love*). The movement between scenes clearly suggests concurrence. Viola becomes not only an actor in Will's play, but his affectionate love interest and his muse. Their romance and her performance on the stage inspire Will to continue developing the textual relationship between Romeo and Juliet.

Up to this point, the dark forces threatening to divide both couples, "real" and fictional, maintain a safe distance. However, the conclusion of the montage suggests that Will and Viola, and with them Romeo and Juliet, must soon face the individuals and institutions that would shatter their temporary joy. As in the balcony scene previously discussed, Viola's nurse progressively interrupts the subsequent montage and, hence, the lovers' sustained fantasy with

frantic calls to her lady. Viola, herself, concludes the entwined chain of events with the textually-inspired observation that, “Being in night, all this is but a dream, / Too flattering-sweet to be substantial” (*Shakespeare in Love*). Although complicit in the subversive romance between Will and Viola, the nurse nevertheless represents the familial institution surrounding her lady.

Staunton’s character, like Juliet’s nurse in Shakespeare’s play, rests somewhere in the middle of a spectrum with Viola at one end, and the financial interests of her wealthy family at the other. The nurse mediates between these two sides. Therefore, her interruption into the montage represents a new, complicating presence on the part of Viola’s family. The young lady cannot continue to hide from their plans for her future, and they are bound to disapprove of her surreptitious relationship with an impoverished playwright in the same way that Juliet Capulet’s family despises all Montagues, including Romeo. In Romeo’s words, Viola wonders at the impermanence of her time with Will, and recognizes that it could and, most likely, will come to an end sooner rather than later (2.1.182-83). With the entrance of Viola’s nurse and the end of the montage, the lovers enter into an uncertain stage of their romance that is threatened by forces similar to those that stand between Romeo and Juliet.

Carlei’s film maintains the classic staging of the balcony scene. However, throughout this sequence, Julian Fellowes’s script contains severe cuts and modifications to Shakespeare’s recorded text. As traditionally expected, Romeo (Douglas Booth) monologues in a garden below a balcony extending from Juliet’s bedroom and navigates vines growing up the wall to his maiden above. Rich string music composed by Abel Korzeniowski plays from the moment Romeo spies light flooding from Juliet’s window. Yet, in a divergence from tradition, the young man’s presence in the garden prompts Juliet (Hailee Steinfeld) to ask, “What man are you, that

hides within the shadows of the night to spy on me?” (*Romeo & Juliet*). This differs dramatically from the more traditional, “What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night, / So stumblest on my council?” (2.1.93-94). The question as written in Fellowes’s script lacks the complexity of Shakespeare’s formulation. It reminds one of the side-by-side translations found on web-based study resources such as “No Fear Shakespeare.” Undoubtedly, many devoted purists experience a natural abhorrence to such butchery of the Bard’s language. Taking the perspective of one who values Shakespeare’s written word over other elements of the play, one senses the loss. Yet, the benefit to Fellowes’s textual adaptation lies in its accessibility. Shakespeare’s delicate wording gives way to language that commands the focus and understanding of a contemporary audience. The startled question Steinfeld’s Juliet poses to her midnight caller possesses a universal clarity that many consider to be missing from Shakespeare’s writing. Viewers easily comprehend Juliet’s meaning and thus find themselves able to shift their focus from merely translating the play’s dialogue, to comprehending the deeper themes that interactions between its characters reveal. The lucidity of Fellowes’s script enables both experienced and unexperienced readers and viewers of the play to seek meaning that often gets buried beneath its archaic language.

Due to their own intelligibility, Korzeniowski’s string music and the blocking of this scene enhance a successful reading of Fellowes’s modernized, simplified language. The music kindles an atmosphere of indefatigable passion. For the duration of the scene, it swells and retreats like the ebb of the tide in an infinite, oceanic cycle. The movement of the string instruments compliments both Romeo’s rush to reach Juliet and the couple’s mutual expressions of love and adoration. The tune played by Korzeniowski’s strings changes only rarely, and Booth’s Romeo follows a modest pattern of movement to the top of Juliet’s balcony. At the

scene's conclusion, the camera leaves him there, wistfully watching Juliet return to her bedroom and her nurse. Viewers do not see Romeo retreat down the vines to the hedge garden below (*Romeo & Juliet*). His uncomplicated movement results in the suspension of the moment during which Juliet, and with her the couple's mutual upswell of passion, disappears for the night. Her exit and Romeo's longing expression draw the scene to a clean and uncomplicated conclusion during which their emotions and the path of their romance can be easily understood. These elements combine beautifully with Fellowes' modified dialogue. The characteristic simplicity of each directorial decision - music, blocking, and script - compliments the other two. The resulting scene effectively conveys the sincere, straightforward passion experienced by Booth's Romeo and Steinfeld's Juliet during their midnight rendezvous.

Luhrmann's adaptation of the balcony scene differs considerably from that which appears in Zeffirelli, Madden, and Carlei's films. In *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, Romeo (Leonardo DiCaprio) does not climb vines or stones to reach Juliet (Clare Danes) up above, nor does he shout at her from the ground below. Rather, Juliet descends the distance between her bedroom balcony and the patio below in a modern steel elevator. Romeo surprises her, and they both fall into the Capulet's swimming pool, where the majority of their conversation occurs (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). In order to fully appreciate the significance of the scene's blocking, viewers must understand that Juliet descends to ground level before noticing Romeo. Her ignorance of his presence unlocks the chain of events in which he startles her and they plunge, together, into the pool. From the moment Romeo and Juliet meet on the patio, they share space equally and on a level plane. Neither avoids the water, and they both hide under its surface from Capulet guards and surveillance cameras. Consequently, they exhibit an equal and

reciprocal camaraderie that the cinematic balcony scenes previously discussed tend to neglect. The space in which the young couple interacts belongs intimately to neither Romeo nor Juliet, but to the Capulet family as a whole. Both lovers assume the guilt of trespassing on that property. The balcony scene as directed by Baz Luhrmann belongs to Romeo and Juliet, together. Neither one of the pair attempts to dictate or dominate the action.

Lindroth calls attention to the roofless characteristic of the open-air Elizabethan playhouse that prevented stage hands from manipulating light to indicate night or day. Therefore, Shakespeare's characters often reference time verbally to demarcate its (usually) accelerated passage (62). As an example, take the aforementioned question that the playwright's Juliet poses to Romeo as he stands beneath her balcony: "What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night, / So stumblest on my council?" (2.1.93-94). Her words confirm that, when Romeo finally reveals himself to her, the darkness of the night still conceals the physical details of his person. An unspecified amount of time has passed since the conclusion of the Capulet ball, yet any hint of morning remains far off in the distance. However, only a little over 100 hundred lines later, Juliet states, "'Tis almost morning," (2.1.221). The unexpected appearance of morning compresses time during the balcony scene. Though it may not feel or appear so to a theatergoing audience, Romeo and Juliet's conversation keeps them awake for the entire night. One imagines the sun just beginning to rise as Romeo rushes from the home of the Capulets. On the Elizabethan stage, Juliet's words alone would have signified this change in the atmosphere of the night. Additionally, audience members would have used her indicators to grasp an understanding of the pace at which time travels during this scene.

In film, time undergoes a different sort of manipulation controlled by visual pacing, rather than textual. Cameramen possess the ability to slow or speed footage and, thereby, stretch or compress moments in time. In Luhrmann's film, "slow-motion shots function to isolate the lovers from the world where real time operates - the world of their parents, the world of feuding families, and the world of violence, life and death" (Lindroth 63). Once the young lovers fall into the swimming pool in the balcony scene mentioned above, they move underwater in slow motion. Sluggish filming transforms them into "a tangle of legs, hands, hair, and phosphorescent light" (Lindroth 63). By contrast, the costume party at the Capulet mansion moves in real time. Even as Romeo and Juliet gaze at one another through the glass of a fish tank, seemingly distant from the rest of the party, the lovers move at a realistic pace (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Juliet's nurse (Miriam Margolyes) bursts onto the scene, dragging Juliet away to dance with Dave Paris (Paul Rudd). The pool is a safe space for Romeo and Juliet. They disappear into the water, and there they hide from the cruel and unforgiving feud that surrounds them. Meanwhile, the party at the Capulet mansion represents all the tensions and unfulfilled expectations that weigh on the couple's fresh, young, idealistic shoulders. There, they cannot escape even for the moment that it takes to gaze at one another through a fish tank. Luhrmann conveys the relative safety of the pool by stretching the time that Romeo and Juliet spend in its comforting embrace. Each second there feels infinite, while in the mansion time passes and decisions are made at an alarming and uncontrollable rate.

The use of jump cuts contrasts scenes shot in both slow motion and in real time. To this point, Lindroth discusses the opening shootout between the young men of the Capulet and Montague families. The camera jumps from man to man and zooms in upon their faces, their

clothing, and the guns in their hands (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). The impression this technique makes upon viewers is “both artificial and disorienting,” according to Lindroth, “as it discourages viewers from looking at the ‘full picture’ and forces them to focus instead on very small details” (62). One might add that the jump cuts in this shootout scene arouse feelings of panic and confusion. They complicate the task of tracking the seemingly staccato and unpredictable movements of the young men, their cars, and their weaponry. The disarray of this opening contrasts sharply with scenes shot in real time and with the slow-motion dance that characterizes interactions between Romeo and Juliet. The men feed on a violence and impulsivity that is captured and reflected in a sharp, jolting style of filmmaking. Even more so than the Capulets’ costume party, the feud between the Montague and Capulet boys reflects the turmoil inherent in Romeo and Juliet’s romance and the improbability of reaching a peaceful resolution.

Substitutions for Shakespeare's Chorus

Even those who have not read the text of *Romeo and Juliet* in full will recognize the opening lines of the prologue delivered by the Chorus: “Two households, both alike in dignity / In fair Verona, where we lay our scene” (1-2). In his 1968 adaptation, Zeffirelli experiments with this omnipotent entity. The film opens with a long, panoramic, overhead shot of Verona, Italy. A voiceover spoken by none other than Laurence Olivier delivers the infamous opening lines of Shakespeare’s Chorus (*Romeo and Juliet*). He disappears for the majority of the film, never materializing in person, and then returns in voice only to deliver the closing lines traditionally assigned to Prince Escalus: “A glooming peace this morning with it brings...” (5.3.304).

Screenwriters Franco Brusati, Masolino D’Amico, and Franco Zeffirelli limit Olivier’s presence

in the film to that of an omniscient, unnamed narrator. He does not appear in the film's credit sequence. As a result, viewers must independently search to discover the name behind the voice of Zeffirelli's updated Chorus. This nameless characteristic contributes to the mysteriousness of Olivier's presence in the film as well as his preeminence. His voiceovers possess a celestial quality that commands the trust and respect of audience members due to his popularity at the time of the film's release and the respect he has garnered as one of history's most prolific Shakespearean actors.

Brusati, D'Amico, and Zeffirelli present Olivier as a sort of self-contained, Shakespearean deity. His power resides solely within the context of the film. Yet, within these boundaries, Olivier's sovereignty is absolute. Like Shakespeare's Chorus, he possesses an intimate understanding of Romeo and Juliet's tragic love story, and assumes absolute responsibility for preparing viewers for the events of these "two-hours' traffic of our stage" (Prologue.12). However, in a divergence from the responsibilities of the traditional Chorus, Olivier also delivers the final farewell to viewers of Zeffirelli's film. He undermines the jurisdiction of Prince Escalus by postulating that, "For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (5.3.308-308). The voiceovers resemble Luhrmann's newscaster in her television screen due to their reliance on the authority of a popular culture icon and the preference this icon receives over a traditional authority figure.

Luhrmann's film also features a creative substitution for Shakespeare's Chorus. Luhrmann replaces this characteristic Chorus with an anchorwoman (Edwina Moore) housed in a television screen, who delivers the opening sonnet next to a breaking news headline that reads "Star-Cross'd Lovers." As she reaches the end of her speech, the words "two households"

supersede both her and the television. Newspaper and magazine headlines concerning the conflict between the feuding houses then cover the screen (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Like Shakespeare's Chorus, the television newscaster assumes the role of narrator by introducing viewers to the world of the play. Unlike the Chorus, however, the newscaster exists only in the twentieth and post-twentieth-century world of television and mass media. Modern viewers recognize this latter device more readily than they would a Shakespearean-style Chorus. They understand the expectations associated with the role of newscaster, and feel comfortable in the presence of this contemporary figure. Luhrmann updates Shakespeare's Chorus in order to increase its accessibility to an audience several centuries removed from the Elizabethan playhouse and intimately familiar with mass media.

Also recognizable to many who may or may not have read *Romeo and Juliet* is Prince Escalus, the voice of law and order in Shakespeare's Verona. Luhrmann replaces this royal figure with the captain of Verona Beach's police force, played by Vondie Curtis-Hall. His name is Captain Prince (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Lindroth asserts that the name both, "recalls Shakespeare's sixteenth-century authority figure, Prince Escalus, and simultaneously subverts the authority evoked through its association with the contemporary entertainer, Prince" (66). The sense of authority to which Lindroth refers comes from Captain Prince's status as a modern representative of law enforcement. Luhrmann's primary audience consists of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Americans who recognize the sovereignty of a police captain more readily than they would that of a prince. The word 'prince' remains in this police captain's name, however, as a reference to Shakespeare's Prince Escalus and, unintentionally perhaps, an ironic nod to Prince, the modern artist and entertainer. Regardless of Luhrmann's intentions with

regard to this latter association, it persists due to the cultural awareness of his viewing audience. Captain Prince, like the newscaster, aids in transitioning the world of the play from Shakespeare's Verona, to Luhrmann's twentieth-century Verona Beach.

Luhrmann's modifications to the Chorus and Prince Escalus collectively allude to the growing influence that entertainers and mass media icons enjoy over the lifestyle decisions of a contemporary, celebrity-worshipping society. While Captain Prince promises that "All are punished" for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, Luhrmann tasks the anchorwoman from the film's introduction with delivering the final monologue that, in Shakespeare's text, is delegated to Prince Escalus (5.3.294). This newscaster replaces actual law enforcement in insisting that, "Some shall be pardoned, and some punished; / For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (5.3.307-309). The film actually concludes with the image of the newscaster on a television screen. As she speaks, the television shrinks and, ultimately, disappears into a black background (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Consequently, the final image film viewers see is that of the newscaster in her seemingly permanent televisual home. She gets the coveted last word on the events of the film and makes her exit in a style that reminds viewers that she and the other characters exist only in pixelated form. Lindroth correctly suggests that this conclusion, like the name Prince, subverts the authority of Luhrmann's police captain (66). It indicates that in the world of the film and, by extension, modern society itself, mass media icons determine the boundaries between correct and antisocial behavior as much as, if not more so than, institutional authority figures.

Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* lacks a rendition of the Chorus comparable to those that appear in Zeffirelli and Luhrmann's films, or comparable to its own explicit transformation of the

balcony scene. However, a side character whose sole purpose seems, at first, to inspire recognition among viewers familiar with the playwrights who dominated English theater following Shakespeare ultimately influences the film's narrative. When audiences first meet young John Webster (Joe Roberts) he sits outside of the Rose Theater, feeding live mice to a stray cat. Later, he spies on Will and Viola during a stolen moment of intimacy at the playhouse, and thereby learns that Viola is, indeed, a woman posing as a man. He reports her to Tilney, the Master of the Revels, who responds by closing the Rose (*Shakespeare in Love*). Webster discovers and reveals information about Viola that should never have become public. No one, not even Master Tilney, seems to question or voice concern over the subversive way in which the boy discovers this information. Similarly, viewers of traditional, staged productions of *Romeo and Juliet* immediately and unquestioningly accept the omnipotence of Shakespeare's Chorus. Therefore, not to viewing audiences, but to the characters in *Shakespeare in Love*, Webster serves the same purpose as the Chorus in the play text of *Romeo and Juliet*. Like the Chorus, he gains a privileged view and knowledge of Will and Viola's relationship, and then shares his insight with a curious audience.

A playwright famous for his bloody tragedies, it seems appropriate that Norman and Stoppard would choose this humorous, fictional representation of John Webster to out the woman whose gender motivates the closing of the Rose. For, at first, the loss of the theater appears fatal to Will, Viola, and the rest of the company. Webster undoubtedly belongs among a cast including fictional representations of historical figures such as William Shakespeare, Philip Henslowe, Richard Burbage, Queen Elizabeth, and Christopher Marlowe. Like these individuals, Webster contributes to the plot of a film in which writers and non-writers, alike, interact and

inadvertently compose one another's lives, scripts, and stories. Ultimately, these characters nearly usurp Norman and Stoppard in the creation of their screenplay. They assume a unique compositional ability and power over the events of the film. Since he functions similarly to Shakespeare's Chorus, John Webster becomes an influential player in a film unique due to its willingness to yield compositional power to fictional characters inspired by historical figures.

The alterations that Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, and Madden make to Shakespeare's Chorus are constructive. Meanwhile, the opening lines delivered in Carlei's film by an uncredited member of the cast aggressively dismantle Shakespeare's language and the essence of his Chorus. The film opens in the midsts of a jousting tournament, over which a strong, male voice speaks the following lines:

Two households, both alike in dignity,
 In fair Verona, where we lay our scene.
 From ancient grudge to new mutiny,
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
 And so the prince has called a tournament,
 To keep the battle from the city streets.
 Now rival Capulets and Montagues.
 They try their strength to gain the royal ring. (*Romeo & Juliet*)

The stanza begins in the recognizable style of the play text, but soon dissolves into an unsuccessful attempt at Shakespearean prose. This artificial second half explains the purpose of the definitively non-Shakespearean joust. Thus, Carlei's Chorus introduces viewers to a cinematic world in which major modifications have been made to the base text of *Romeo and*

Juliet. These changes do not always simplify the play, as in Carlei's balcony scene. Mercutio (who Fellowes and Carlei assign to the Montague family, rather than that of the prince) triumphs over Tybalt in the joust, which causes heated emotions and a street brawl resembling that which opens the play text (*Romeo & Juliet*). Therefore, while the addition of the tournament certainly gives a clear and indisputable cause for heated tensions between the Capulets and the Montagues, it does so unnecessarily and in a convoluted manner. It moves the film in a wide circle, ultimately bringing viewers back to the very spot from which Shakespeare's text would have begun. The scene treats viewers as if they are not intelligent enough to understand an ancient house rivalry without explicit explanation and clarification. Therefore, even liberally-minded viewers open to modification may find the scene unpleasantly jarring, and the language an inadequate and unnecessary substitution for the original text. Carlei's replacement for Shakespeare's Chorus conditions viewers to expect the rest of his film to feature alterations that may or may not operate in a constructive manner.

References and Cultural Anachronism

Intertextual references built into the structure of Luhrmann and Madden's films orient viewers and draw them closer to otherwise unfamiliar settings. The jump cuts in Luhrmann's opening shootout emphasize references the film makes to Shakespeare's text and to the tradition of the Elizabethan theater. The "very small details" to which Lindroth alludes include a label stamped along the barrel of Benvolio's gun that reads, "Sword 9mm series" (62). The other men fight with guns carrying the insignias of their noble houses. Near the end of the fighting, as Lord Capulet declares, "Hand me my longsword," he reaches for a rifle (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Luhrmann not only modernizes this scene, but cultivates meta-theatricality in the

process. First, he substitutes modern guns for the swords of the Elizabethan stage. He then uses text, image, and dialogue to remind viewers that the guns are a nontraditional replacement for swords. The label on the barrel of Benvolio's weapon, the insignias on those of his companions, and Capulet's request for his "longsword" all reference the original text and style of performance from which Luhrmann formed his adaptation. It goes without saying that by placing guns, instead of swords, into the hands of the young men, Luhrmann transforms the duel of Shakespeare's text into something more immediately recognizable to an audience of 20th- and 21st-century Americans. However, in the process of updating Elizabethan performance, he manages to reflect on and preserve the essence of the very convention he aims to modernize.

Lord Capulet's command - "Hand me my longsword" - exemplifies the countless references, textual and visual, that Luhrmann's film makes to Shakespeare's language. In the background to the film's main action, one billboard reads, "Shoot Forth Thunder," while another boldly states, "such stuff as dreams are made of." Signs advertise the services of the "Merchant of Verona Beach," "Out Damned Spot Dry Cleaners," and "Montague Construction." Careful eyes will spot the Globe Theater Pool Hall and Post Haste delivery van lurking on set (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). These details, hidden cleverly in plain sight, reference more than just the text of *Romeo and Juliet*. Readers of *Henry VI (Part 2)*, *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Macbeth* will recognize the quotations as having come from these oft-cited works in Shakespeare's canon. The references transform Luhrmann's Verona Beach into something greater than just the set of *Romeo and Juliet*. Instead, is a connected universe encompassing details from a wide array of Shakespeare's plays. Verona Beach reminds one of Stratford-upon-Avon, where restaurants, gift shops, and bed-and-breakfasts carry names alluding to Shakespeare's life and

literary career. As a result, the film concerns itself not only with its title characters, but also with the author of the text that initially brought *Romeo and Juliet* to life onstage.

Shakespeare in Love exhibits a similar use of intertextual allusion to Shakespeare's life and career. For instance, when viewers first meet Will Shakespeare, he sits at his writing desk practicing his signature and, with it, different spellings of his name (*Shakespeare in Love*). Davis and Womack rationalize the scene: "Such an improbable event refers both to twentieth-century notions of celebrity and to the historical fact that six remarkably different versions of Shakespeare's signature survive" (156). Twenty-first-century ideas about celebrity closely resemble those of the previous century. Any difference lies in the fact that celebrity culture has lost the sense of newness that it certainly possessed a hundred years ago. Modern viewers undoubtedly discover excitement and entertainment in the opportunity to imagine William Shakespeare behaving as a stereotype of the contemporary star. Functionally, the scene translates Shakespeare into the present day. It shrinks the distance between him and viewers, and facilitates a sense of familiarity missing from a truly Elizabethan rendition of the playwright. Few movie-watchers recognize the historical significance surrounding these various spellings of Shakespeare's name. However, those who do undoubtedly feel and enjoy a beneficial proximity to the screenplay and to the knowledge and creativity of its authors. To these audience members, Will Shakespeare develops a unique tangibility and accessibility.

The references to Shakespeare's plays included in Norman and Stoppard's script deal less directly with the text than those tucked into the set of Luhrmann's film. Instead, action and events recall full scenes from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Twelfth Night*. At the funeral held for Christopher Marlowe (Rupert Everett), Lord Wessex (Colin Firth) sees Will and, as yet unaware

of Will's true identity, believes him to be Marlowe's ghost (*Shakespeare in Love*). This moment evokes similar scenes from both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in which tragic protagonists interact with the ghosts of murdered characters (Davis and Womack 156). The film concludes as Will sits, once more, at his writing desk. He begins drafting a play about a young woman shipwrecked on a deserted island. The woman's name is Viola, and Shakespeare titles his new play "Twelfth Night" (*Shakespeare in Love*). The intended reference is impossible to miss, yet no less powerful than the subtle allusion to Shakespeare's tragedies mentioned above. Viola De Lesseps has become Will Shakespeare's permanent and infinite muse; she is his "heroine for all time" (*Shakespeare in Love*). The film seems to suggest that, even after the Curtain Theater performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, Viola continues to inspire Will's playwriting. This insinuation, though an enormous creative liberty taken by Norman and Stoppard, nevertheless brings audiences closer to the narrative. It engages viewers both emotionally and critically. Audiences feel heartbroken for Will and Viola's forced separation, wistful in response to Shakespeare's rejuvenated creative energy, and skeptical that such a muse ever contributed to the playwright's success.

The films' use of intertextual references and moments of modernity assist in translating the tale of *Romeo and Juliet* for the benefit of contemporary popular audiences. To this end, the writers of *Shakespeare in Love* have imbued the film with a rich collection of culturally anachronistic moments. Davis and Womack argue that modern implants, "...transform *Shakespeare in Love*'s otherwise alien Elizabethan locale into an immediately recognizable urban landscape" (156). The critics cite details including the souvenir mug from Stratford-upon-Avon sitting atop Will Shakespeare's writing desk and the scene in which Shakespeare visits a proto-

Freudian psychoanalyst named Dr. Moth. During the writer's appointment with Dr. Moth, Davis and Womack note that, "Will unknowingly employs a vocabulary of sexual dysfunction designed to elicit recognition in a contemporary audience" (156). One might presume, without watching the film, that such anachronistic moments will, unavoidably, confuse the narrative. On the contrary, these moments privilege viewers with a sense of familiarity and intimacy that a purely and truthfully Elizabethan setting has no hope of achieving among members of a twenty- or twenty-first-century audience. "The contemporary feel of the humor...makes the movie play like a contest between 'Masterpiece Theatre' and Mel Brooks," Ebert observes. With each reference made to modern culture, the setting of *Shakespeare in Love* moves a bit closer in proximity to the humors of its intended viewership.

Another culturally anachronistic moment occurs near the end of the film, at the conclusion of the players' Curtain Theater performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. When Queen Elizabeth I (Judy Dench) intervenes on behalf of Viola de Lesseps and her fellow performers, the monarch states, "I know something of a woman in a man's profession. Yes, by God, I do know about that" (*Shakespeare in Love*). Her comment, while unsuitable to a historically accurate recreation of the Elizabethan era, certainly fulfills the expectations of twentieth- and twenty-first-century viewers familiar and concerned with the feminist argument in favor of women's rights. By 1998, feminists had firmly established their concerns in the discourses of lawmaking, civil rights, and popular culture. Give their own cultural realities, British and American film-viewing audiences of the time would have accepted, if not expected, such a powerful statement from the Virgin Queen. Even now, in the year 2017, this characteristic of Madden's intended viewership remains true. The image of "a woman in a man's profession" still strikes a familiar chord in the

minds of audience members living in an age where women must continually fight for rights and recognition equal to those enjoyed by men. Contemporary viewers actually think of Queen Elizabeth I as one of history's strongest and most independent females, and to see her portrayed as such decreases the yawning chasm between their cultural ideas and those of Elizabethan England. Norman and Stoppard effectively translate feminist social and political ideas of the modern era into sixteenth-century England, and thereby increase viewers' comfort and familiarity with the setting of *Shakespeare in Love*.

Cultural anachronism serves yet another purpose beyond that of habituating audience members to Madden's unique re-creation of Elizabethan England. Additionally, it belongs among the host of meta narrative techniques that develop the plot of *Shakespeare in Love* and, simultaneously, the text of Will Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In this film, as in any other, characters compose the screenplay through their words and actions. In the process of doing so, they modify the course of the romance between Will and Viola and, with it, Will's newest tragicomic play. The montage already discussed exemplifies the influence of Will's relationship with Viola over the language and plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. At the conclusion of the montage, Viola realizes the unavoidably temporary nature of her time with Will. Soon thereafter, her father (Nicholas le Prevost) forces her into an engagement with the deplorably machiavellian Lord Wessex. Will responds to this unfortunate turn in events by transforming his comedic play into the tragedy familiar to anyone who has read or watched *Romeo and Juliet* (*Shakespeare in Love*). Screenwriters Norman and Stoppard tie Will and Viola's relationship inextricably to the fictional romance that Will invents between Romeo and Juliet. Will, himself, sets the play on paper. However, he gleans inspiration from his own experiences and the forces that shape them. These

forces include other characters, such as Sir Robert de Lesseps, whose decisions and actions compose the setting within and obstacles around which Will and Viola must navigate themselves and their relationship.

As if she had nothing better to do, Dench's Queen Elizabeth also dips an authorial hand into the metaphorical mixing pot of storylines that color Madden's film. Davis and Womack designate her "both the ultimate author and interpreter of Will and Viola's fate" (159). She assumes this role, first, when she challenges Viola to prove, through Will's work, that a play can present "the very truth and nature of love" (*Shakespeare in Love*). The Curtain Theater performance of *Romeo and Juliet* achieves this end. However, the success of the performance does not stop Elizabeth from permanently dividing Viola from Will. The queen explains, "Those whom God has joined in marriage, not even I can put asunder" (*Shakespeare in Love*). With this final statement of intent, Elizabeth dashes into dust any lingering hopes of a permanent union between the playwright and his lady love. She acts as both the final obstacle standing in the way of their relationship, as well as the ultimate determiner of their fate. In the style of a traditional *deus ex machina*, Queen Elizabeth literally descends from the upper gallery of the playhouse. She stands before her subjects wearing a headpiece that creates a sparkling, glorifying aura around her face and delivers her final, frustrating testimony. Elizabeth's official role in the society populating Madden's film supports this understanding of her faculty. As Queen, she possesses ultimate sway over her subjects and their individual destinies. As members of this society, both Viola and Will must recognize her decision as final and irrevocable. Even in the meta narrative fabric of Madden's film, neither character possesses the authority to challenge this figurehead of the English monarchy.

However, contemporary audiences in both America and Great Britain understand the power wielded by Dench's Queen Elizabeth only conceptually, since the divine and ultimate monarchy of the Elizabethan era no longer exists in either nation. To remedy this historical divide, the screenwriters modernized their rendition of the Virgin Queen. They imparted onto her an awareness of her relevance in the feminist discourses of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-centuries. Her previously-discussed self-identification as, "a woman in a man's profession" exemplifies this attempted modernization, as does her improbable concealment in the gallery of the Curtain Theater. Upon exiting the theater, she playfully reprimands the players for failing to lay their coats upon the muddy ground to protect her exquisite shoes and skirts (*Shakespeare in Love*). Historically, the queen would never have sat among commoners at the playhouse. Instead, she would have assumed a position in the "balcony seats above the stage, reserved for nobles and royalty" (Williamson 71). Furthermore, the idea of her concealment and that of her enormous clothing from even those seated in close proximity to her is improbable at best. In the style of a person acutely aware of their own anomalous behavior, Elizabeth scoffs at the ineptitude of her subjects who act unsure of how best to approach her beyond the customary kneeling below her level.

Once again, Norman, Stoppard, and Dench present audiences with a culturally anachronistic representation of Queen Elizabeth I. She appears potently self-aware of her unconventionality, and expresses distaste for those who dare to openly gawk at her revolutionary behavior. Once again, Dench's Elizabeth fulfills the expectations of twenty-first-century feminists who would like to view her as consistently groundbreaking and independent. Even those who do not identify with the feminist movement will undoubtedly recognize her as

someone who exemplifies its well-known and frequently discussed tenets. She is the embodiment of a modern idea translated into a creatively liberal rendition of the era of Elizabeth's reign and Shakespeare's playwriting. Functionally, this anachronism serves as a bridge between audience members and the Elizabethan-esque setting of Madden's film. It gives viewers a recognizable entity onto which they may latch among a host of other, less familiar individuals and characteristics of the time period.

In Zeffirelli's film, Olivia Hussey portrays an interpretation of Juliet as a young woman who, like Dench's Queen Elizabeth in *Shakespeare in Love*, embodies modern notions of female autonomy. Unlike Elizabeth, Hussey's Juliet experiences, expresses, and acts upon both sexual awareness and desire. In addition to her observations regarding Juliet's strength during the balcony scene, Scott notes that, "The colorful visual excess of Zeffirelli's ball scene creates a space for Juliet's sexual awakening and her self-progression from adolescence to womanhood" (138). In support of her analysis, this critic identifies the warm lighting, extravagant arrangements of fruit and wine, Juliet's red dress, and the "rich fabrics" that adorn other men and women in the swiftly moving ballroom (138). Furthermore, Scott observes, the camerawork portraying an early ballroom-scene interaction between the lovers preferences Juliet's reactions over Romeo's. A close-up image of Juliet's face fills the screen as Romeo delivers the line, "My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand" (1.5.94). Juliet closes her eyes slowly, as if in a trance brought on by her first experience of sexual desire (*Romeo and Juliet*). Notably, the camera fails to indulge viewers with an equivalent gaze into Romeo's inner journey through adolescent sexuality. Instead, audience members identify with Juliet's experience alone. The act of closing her eyes suggests that she internalizes her passion. She is an autonomous

being who, though mutual in her attraction to Romeo, nevertheless fosters this attraction individually. Rather than passively receiving Romeo's complimentary advances, Hussey's Juliet actively yearns for the young man.

The act of representing a young, consciously desiring Juliet in the context of Shakespeare's Verona is as culturally anachronistic as the image of a feminist Queen Elizabeth I. Hussey's Juliet is as strong and independent as Dench's Queen Elizabeth, despite and because of her attraction to Whiting's Romeo. Particularly in America, the 1960's witnessed the rejuvenation of arguments in favor of women's rights to equality and to sexual autonomy. Zeffirelli's film reached popular audiences at the conclusion of this revolutionary decade, and consequently felt the influence of '60s ideals regarding the license and capability of women to own their sexuality. Hussey's Juliet reflects this revolution in the way that society views women and desire. She is a flower-child and yet, because women's rights to equality and to sexuality continue to grow, she also belongs in the world of the twenty-first century. Modern viewers recognize her timeless quality of self-determination and her unapologetic awareness of her own physicality. While the dances and music at the masquerade ball, and indeed the very concept of a traditional masquerade, may seem strange and unfamiliar, Juliet herself provides viewers with an identifiably contemporary entity to latch onto among all that overwhelms their senses. The culturally anachronistic presence of Hussey's Juliet within Zeffirelli's rendition of Shakespeare's Verona, like that of Dench's Queen Elizabeth I within Madden's interpretation of Elizabethan England, eases the difficulty viewers may experience in relating to the film's setting and events. Juliet frames Zeffirelli's film in such a way that it and its characters gain relevance to a contemporary audience.

Cinematography and Viewer Engagement

Due in part to the onslaught of films and television shows to which they are exposed on an almost daily basis, modern consumers of popular culture have become familiar with the techniques of filmmaking. They recognize the ability of filmmakers to translate the storytelling devices used in literature into an image-based communication system. This translation harks back to Ray's "narrative transmutability." One image conveys many words at a time, eliminating the need for a full uprooting and replanting of Shakespeare's text.

Both Luhrmann and Carlei cinematize the scene in which Friar Laurence discloses his plan to fake Juliet's death and reunite her with Romeo. The directors augment their screenplays with cinematic storytelling devices that remind viewers to consider that the action unfolding on screen is, in fact, part of a film. To this end, Luhrmann employs split-screen narration. Father Laurence (Pete Postlethwaite) appears on the right side of the screen, while an imaginary scenario on the left depicts the successful completion of his scheme (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). For the duration of the split-screen, the narratives coexist like two films in individual theaters. One occurs in real time, while the other compresses the events of a blissful and impossible conclusion to Romeo and Juliet's love story. Lindroth refers to the moment as a "movie-within-a-movie" (63). The scene prompts viewers to consider that they are watching a film in which the passage of time is subject to constant manipulation, and in which multiple versions of reality may coexist. A successful reading of the split-screen demands a willing suspension of disbelief and an ability to dissolve known boundaries demarcating fiction from truth.

Carlei uses montage to create an effect similar to that achieved by the split-screen in Luhrmann's adaptation. Like Luhrmann's split-screen, the montage accompanies Friar Laurence's description of his scheme. It portrays Romeo leaving Verona and arriving in a new land and Juliet swallowing the sleeping draught given to her by Friar Laurence (Paul Giamatti). In the montage, Romeo receives the friar's letter and returns to Verona. He wakes Juliet with a kiss, and the two lovers ride off into the sunset (*Romeo & Juliet*). Montage is a visual device, and singularly useful to the film medium. It functions similarly to the split-screen, and creates the "movie-within-a-movie" effect described by Lindroth (63). Additionally, this particular montage exhibits an association with the classic Hollywood ending in which two fortunate protagonists defeat the odds and ride off on horseback into the setting sun. It conjures wistfulness in viewers who understand the impossibility of such a blissful conclusion. Both this ironic image and the device of the montage, itself, remind viewers that they are watching a film destined to end in tragedy. Audience members must reconcile this knowledge with the supplied image of Romeo and Juliet living happily ever after.

Voiceover and image placement function similarly to split-screen and montage. In *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, Luhrmann employs the two former devices in order to suggest unspoken dialogue, details, and relationships. Early in the film, when viewers meet Romeo for the first time, he sits underneath the stage of the Sycamore Grove, smoking a cigarette and scribbling in his notebook. The camera zooms in on Romeo's writing, and a voiceover in DiCaprio's voice quotes Act 1, Scene 1, lines 169-170 of Shakespeare's text: "O brawling love, a loving hate, / Oh anything of nothing first create" (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). In order to understand this construction, a viewer must associate script with

camera focus. The two work together to form a cinematic world in which disembodied voices read the content of a character's romantic musings. Of course, this characteristic of Luhrmann's world is far from realistic. It flouts conventions of reality, which insist upon the attachment of a voice to a speaker. Luhrmann modifies this convention by marrying DiCaprio's voice, not to his character's speech, but to the journal entry upon which the camera focuses. Viewers who adjust to the unrealistic style of filming will understand that the voice represents Romeo's thoughts in that meditative moment.

The landmark scene during which Romeo kills Tybalt (John Leguizamo) necessitates a similar rearrangement of expectations. Viewers must reconcile the unanticipated placement of images with no obvious correlation. While Romeo battles his foe, the camera transports viewers to Juliet's bedroom, where she rests peacefully on her bed among pillows and blankets. She looks over her shoulder, startled, just as Romeo's gun discharges for the last time (*William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*). Viewers know that Juliet cannot see the deadly brawl between Romeo and Tybalt. Nor does Juliet suspect that their mutual resentment will boil over at that specific moment. She contrasts the blistering hatred demonstrated by the men from a distance that is both physical and emotional. However, the deliberate splicing of Juliet's image into the battle sequence forces an association between her expression of shock and Tybalt's death at Romeo's hands. It creates a visual narrative in which Juliet somehow senses the shooting's fatal outcome. The series of images suggests that she and Romeo share an intrinsic emotional connection that immediately alerts her to the violence that has transpired.

Carlei also manipulates image placement in order to convey unspoken details that are, nevertheless, vital to a comprehensive understanding of the film. During Romeo and Juliet's

church elopement, bright colors dominate the screen and soft music plays in the background. However, almost immediately after the couple takes their vows, the camera redirects its attention to Tybalt (Ed Westwick) sharpening his sword in near-darkness (*Romeo & Juliet*). The contrast between scenes is immediate and dramatic. The camera jumps from light to darkness, bliss to foreboding, and love to hate. Viewers promptly understand that bloodshed and heartbreak loom in the young couple's future. Furthermore, one presumes, and rightly so, that Juliet's own cousin Tybalt will light the match that sparks this final and most bloody battle between the Montagues and Capulets. Both the darkness in which filmmakers bathe his image and his repetitive sword-sharpening movement suggest the brutality of the thoughts coursing through Tybalt's mind. At the same moment, as suggested by the rapid shift in camera focus, Romeo and Juliet carry out their controversial elopement with no sense of the danger lying ahead. They believe in the promise of a future together imbued with the same romantic feelings inspired by their visually and aurally brilliant wedding. Viewers, meanwhile, recognize the futility of Romeo and Juliet's plans as well as the identity of the catalyst who triggers their tragic downfall.

Concluding Thoughts

Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei's adaptations update the balcony scene, the Chorus, and even the characters of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* with the intention of framing their films to meet the needs and expectations of late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century viewers. As demonstrated by Carlei's revisions to the Chorus, these updates sometimes muddle, rather than clarify, Shakespeare's material. However, one must not write off adaptation in general due to the failure of one or two scenes. Furthermore, the films employ intertextual references, cultural anachronism, and cinematic devices in order to increase ease of understanding for

viewers unfamiliar with the language and setting of the original play. As with any art form, viewers must actively watch and engage with the films to appreciate the way in which the language of cinema eases comprehension.

Enduring characteristics of the films in which they appear tend to emerge from the four balcony scenes, including Madden's nontraditional "adaptation." For instance, under Madden's direction, the balcony scene draws a connection between the social and familial forces that shape Will and Viola's relationship as well as that pursued by Romeo and Juliet. Meanwhile, Luhrmann demonstrates the equal and reciprocal infraction of private property of which DiCaprio's Romeo and Danes's Juliet both assume guilt. All four reproductions of the scene recall themes that persevere throughout the four films, and also contribute to the directors' efforts to transport Shakespeare's work through the centuries and into the present era. Moving forward, Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei exhibit creativity and cultural awareness in their updates to the Chorus of Shakespeare's text. Like the balcony scenes, each reproduction frames and reinforces themes vital to each director's specific adaptation.

Additionally, Luhrmann and Madden's films include allusions to both well-known and obscure facts and conjectures regarding Shakespeare's language and his life - such as his commencement in Stratford-upon-Avon and the six different spellings of his name that have outlived the playwright himself. These references capture the attention of viewers and promote deeper engagement with the films in which they appear. Finally, the culturally anachronistic moments that contribute to the humor in Madden's film and characterize Juliet in Zeffirelli's also increase the accessibility of *Romeo and Juliet*. References to modern feminist ideas familiarize viewers to the otherwise alien settings of the two adaptations.

Viewers must willingly suspend disbelief and dive wholeheartedly into the world of cinema to understand Luhrmann's split-screen narration and Carlei's montage depiction of Friar Laurence's scheme to reunite the banished Romeo and heartbroken Juliet. During a simpler instance of cinematography that occurs earlier in the chronology of Luhrmann's film, the director employs voiceover to convey the internal musings of his male protagonist. Both this scene and later instances of message-bearing image placement in both Luhrmann and Carlei's films emphasize the artistic and cinematic manipulation to which each of the films has been subjected. The voiceover through which Laurence Olivier delivers the prologue in Zeffirelli's film and the prolonged montage in Madden's that interweaves Will and Viola's romance with that of Romeo and Juliet also qualify as cinematic interpretations and translations. They, like similar instances in Luhrmann and Carlei's films, condition audiences to expect the language of cinema, rather than that of William Shakespeare.

One might suggest to the purists who denounce film reconstructions of Shakespeare's plays that the benefit of these adaptations lies in their ability to communicate with a vast, diverse, contemporary audience. They demystify Shakespeare for modern consumers of literature, film, and theater to whom the language may seem unintelligible. Unmasking the language of the plays reveals themes that, upon close inspection, resonate beautifully with that which can be found in contemporary literature and stage performance. Teenage lovebirds, feuding families, authority figures, and feminist role models exist in in modern, consumer-driven society as they do in Shakespeare's Verona. However, the average contemporary member of society can decipher the language of the silver screen more readily than the untouched parlance of the Bard. Generally, film possesses a readability and an accessibility that Shakespeare's plays lack in the hands and

sights of modern readers and viewers. Since the birth of Hollywood, the consumer of film has learned to read split-screen, montage, and voiceover as easily if not more so than he reads words printed on paper. Shakespeare's archaic language adds another layer of obscurity, complicating the task of comprehension. To remedy this, Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei translate the events, themes, and characters presented by Shakespeare's text into a visual language that both captures and sustains the attention of twenty- and twenty-first-century viewers.

The similarity between Shakespeare's language and that of the movie screen lies in the contemporaneity of each medium. The playwright's Elizabethan audience experienced the same ease of comprehension that film-viewing audiences appreciate today. To them, the dialogue, monologues, and soliloquies spoken by the cast of *Romeo and Juliet* possessed clarity comparable to that of film in the twenty- and twenty-first centuries. Furthermore, film possesses the unique ability to adapt Shakespeare's text in much the same way that the Bard once manipulated his own source material. As previously discussed, Shakespeare borrowed the plot of his play from Brooke's *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (who translated Boastuau, who translated Bandello, etc.). Today, filmmakers borrow from Shakespeare to develop the plot, language, and essence of their projects. They make modifications, such as Luhrmann's Verona Beach setting or Zeffirelli's invisible and omniscient Chorus played by the uncredited Laurence Olivier. Yet, through all these replications, the basic plot of the tragic, star-crossed lovers who derive from warring families remains untouched.

Despite the abundant resemblances between literature and film, the clearly demarcated boundaries between Shakespeare's text and cinematic adaptations of his plays remain intact. Film cannot and never will serve as a proper substitution for a thorough reading of *Romeo and*

Juliet. The distinction between the mediums extends to stage performance. Although students and instructors of literature read Shakespeare, they do so with the knowledge that the playwright composed his plays for performance. He never intended for them to be read like printed literature. However, in the twenty-first century, stage performance does not possess the massive, popular culture appeal of film. Scholars, critics, performers, and directors often segregate the mediums as examples of high and low art. They attach a sense of intellectual superiority to stage performance and disparage film as the product of a consumer-driven, commercial industry. Such opinions have sparked a debate that belongs outside of this paper, however the fact remains that many hold stage performance up on a pedestal above cinema and other forms of popular entertainment.

Shakespeare's theatrical intentions complicate the relationship between his texts and their cinematic equivalents. Can film adaptations replace stage performances of *Romeo and Juliet*? Should they? Perhaps the word "replace" is too strong. In classrooms across the United States, instructors of literature show clips of Zeffirelli and Luhrmann's films in order to expose their students to "Shakespeare performed." They use the films as imperfect substitutions for a stage performance of the play. Live theater would better capture the essence of Shakespeare. However, the cost of transporting students to the theater far exceeds that of rolling a television or a projector into a classroom. To reap any scholastic benefit from viewing a film adaptation of one of Shakespeare's plays, audience members must engage critically with the material. They must willingly suspend disbelief and attempt to recognize the moments where conventions of cinematic storytelling resemble or differ from the techniques used in Shakespeare's play text and, if possible, on the Elizabethan stage. The sustained relevance of Shakespeare on the silver screen

depends on such critical engagement. Despite their origin in the multimillion dollar film industry, these adaptations possess the unique potential to increase the Bard's readability and accessibility. Like all forms of art, high and low, they demand committed effort on the part of the consumer. In this way, film adaptations of plays like *Romeo and Juliet* resemble and evoke the essence of their theatrical and literary counterparts. Through a medium that is more immediately comprehensible to the modern man or woman, adaptations enable contemporary audiences to replicate the experience of watching or reading Shakespeare's plays on the stage or page.

Why do film directors such as Zeffirelli, Luhrmann, Madden, and Carlei seem to care so much about *Romeo and Juliet*? For starters, any adaptation of the play is almost destined to procure enormous profits. Beyond economic concerns, however, the answer probably has something to do with Roger Ebert's observation that, "By writing the play, Shakespeare began the shaping of modern drama, in which the fates of ordinary people are as crucial as those of the great" ("Romeo and Juliet"). The teenaged lovers are quite different from Shakespeare's other tragic heroes. On a technical level, they lack tragic or fatal flaws beyond their own youthful impulsivity. Romeo and Juliet cannot realistically assume blame for this "flaw" since it unavoidably accompanies the onset of adolescence. For this reason, audiences find the lovers more relatable than Hamlet, Othello, Julius Caesar, or Macbeth. Romeo and Juliet represent the common man or woman who has, undoubtedly, experienced the whims and the passions of adolescence along with first love.

The enduring success of *Romeo and Juliet* testifies to Shakespeare's uncanny ability to produce and focus on a theme that has proven to be as relevant today as it presumably was in 1595. Film adaptations of the play enjoy box office success due to its universality. Adolescents

relate directly to *Romeo and Juliet*, and the play produces in grown adults remembrances of their adolescent years. Scholars excepted, audiences seem to appreciate the play, not for its connection to Shakespeare, but for its ubiquitous subject matter. Shakespeare's blending of prose and verse affects only the most careful of literarily-minded viewers and readers. This is not an inherently disagreeable circumstance, although it does illuminate a shift in priorities among popular audiences. Film adaptations have enabled this shift; such that the play no longer seems to be "William Shakespeare's" *Romeo and Juliet*, but a narrative belonging to all of mankind no matter the place or the century. It is actually refreshing to drain the rigidly Shakespearean aura from a work containing such truly universal material. As seen in Carlei's film, attempts to do so do not always function effectively. Yet, for every misconstrued update, several others (in different films, perhaps) communicate successfully with audiences. Film adaptation has freed *Romeo and Juliet* from the purist cell in which it once sat, drained of creative energy, and allowed the play the freedom it needs to thrive in the modern century.

Works Cited

- Andrew, Dudley. "Adaptation." *Film Adaptation*. Ed. James Naremore. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000. 28-37. Print.
- Berardinelli, James. "West Side Story (United States, 1961)." *REELVIEWS.net*. N.p., n.d. Web. 2 Apr. 2017.
- Davis, Todd F., and Kenneth Womack. "Reading (and Writing) the Ethics of Authorship: *Shakespeare in Love* as Postmodern Narrative." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 32.2 (2004): 153-172. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Jan. 2017.
- Ebert, Roger. "Romeo and Juliet." *RogerEbert.com*. Ebert Digital LLC, 17 Sept. 2000. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- Ebert, Roger. "Shakespeare in Love." *RogerEbert.com*. Ebert Digital LLC, 25 Dec. 1998. Web. 29 Mar. 2017.
- Gleiberman, Owen. "Movie Review: 'William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet'." *EW.com*. Time Inc., 26 July 2007. Web. 10 Apr. 2017.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Romeo and Juliet." *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2008. 897-904. Print.
- Lindroth, Mary. "The Prince and the Newscaster: Baz Luhrmann Updates Shakespeare for a Y2K Audience." *Studies in Popular Culture* 22.3 (2000): 55-68. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Jan. 2017.
- Passafiume, Andrea. "Romeo and Juliet (1936)." *TCM.com*. Turner Classic Movies, Inc., n.d. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.
- Ray, Robert B. "The Field of 'Literature and Film'." *Film Adaptation*. Ed. James Naremore. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000. 38-53. Print.
- Romeo & Juliet*. Dir. Carlo Carlei. Perf. Hailee Steinfeld and Douglas Booth. Amber Entertainment, 2013. Netflix.
- Romeo and Juliet*. Dir. Franco Zeffirelli. Perf. Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting. BHE Films, 1968. Amazon Video.
- Scott, Lindsey. "Closed in a Dead Man's Tomb: Juliet, Space, and the Body in Franco Zeffirelli's and Baz Luhrmann's Films of Romeo and Juliet." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 36.2 (2008): 137-46. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Mar. 2017.

Shakespeare in Love. Dir. John Madden. Perf. Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes. Universal Pictures, 1998. Netflix.

Shakespeare, William. "The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet." *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2008. 905-72. Print.

William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet. Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Perf. Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Bazmark Films, 1996. DVD.

Williamson, Lynette. "Virtual Seating in the Globe Theatre: Appreciating Film Adaptations of Shakespeare's Plays." *The English Journal* 99.1 (2009): 71-73. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 Apr. 2017.

Wloszczyna, Susan. "Romeo and Juliet." *RogerEbert.com*. Ebert Digital LLC, 11 Oct. 2013. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.